

JOINT MEETING OF THE  
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
ROOM 802, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 12, 2004, 9:30 A.M.

<b>Augusta-Richmond Co Planning Commission</b>	<b>Aiken County</b>
George Patty	Stephen Strohming
Paul DeCamp	
Lynn Russell	<b>GA DOT</b>
Sangeetha Rao	Christa McKinney
Juriah Lewis	Beth Edmiston
	Matthew Fowler
<b>Augusta-Richmond County</b>	
Heyward Johnson	<b>CAC</b>
Travis Davidson	Ben Donaldson
Teresa Smith	Eric Schumacher
	Butch Gallop
<b>SC DOT</b>	Marianne Pecoraro
Brian Fulmer	
	<b>City of Aiken</b>
<b>FHWA</b>	Sandra Korbek
Carlos Gonzales	

**Mrs. Pecoraro was welcomed as the new CAC member representing Aiken and introduced to the Committee members.**

- 1. Consider approval of the minutes from the joint TCC and CAC meeting held on March 10, 2004.**

Mr. Johnson noted an error on page three, under the Augusta Public Transit status report. The money should be \$4.5 million instead of \$1.5 million.

**CAC** - Mr. Schumacher moved and Mr. Donaldson seconded the motion to approve the March 10, 2004 minutes with the above corrections. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**TCC** - Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Edmiston seconded the motion to approve the March 10, 2004 minutes with the above corrections. The minutes were unanimously approved.

## **2. Issues and Concerns**

### **(a) Prior**

Mr. Fulmer told the Committees that the metal post at SC 118 has been removed by the contractor.

Mr. Davidson from Augusta Public Works is looking at the Wheeler Road / Robert C. Daniel Parkway corridor study to consider which action to take. A suggestion was made at a prior meeting to install permanent lane dividers on eastbound Wheeler Road @ the I-520 exit ramp so as to prohibit cars from blocking the thru lanes in an effort to reach the turn lane into Robert C. Daniel Parkway.

Mr. Johnson inquired about the sharp angles on the new Windsor Spring Road sidewalks. Georgia DOT will check the state regulations for angle degrees for wheelchair ramps on sidewalks.

### **(b) Current / New**

Mrs. Pecoraro asked about the inconsistency in speed limits on Whiskey Road. The limits go from 35 to 45 to 55 and then back down to 35. Mr. Fulmer suggested checking with Aiken County Safety Department. The Safety Officer sets speed limits on roads.

Mr. Schumacher suggested not designing roads for speeds up to 45mph and then post it for 35 mph. This causes problems with speeders. The nature of roads changes the speed limits.

Traffic Engineering departments in either local offices or DOT offices set the speed limits. Mr. Fulmer will check this and report at the next meeting.

Mr. Schumacher asked about the cost of installing a protected right turn signal when a protected left turn light is installed, such as from Davis Road to Washington Road. If you are making a right turn from Washington Road onto Davis Road the sign says "No turn on Red". A protected right turn signal at this location would reduce congestion and cut down on air pollution.

## **3. Status of Project Reports**

### **(a) Georgia Highways**

Ms. McKinney presented this item.

- ♦ Plans and right-of-way are 100% complete on the bridge replacement on Columbia Road @ Crawford Creek (PI#0000809). This project will be let for bids in June.
- ♦ The right-of-way acquisition is complete on the grade separation project of Parham Road at the CSX railroad (PI#271040). This is a joint effort with Augusta Public Works and GDOT. This project will be let for bids May 21.
- ♦ A public information meeting will be held at the Boathouse on June 3 for the St. Sebastian / Greene Street Extension project (262750).
- ♦ The intersection improvement on SR 56 @ New Goshen Road has been let. Construction will begin soon.

### **(b) South Carolina Highways.**

Mr. Fulmer presented this item. The status of two projects has changed since the last meeting.

- ♦ Palmetto Parkway Phase I is 91% complete. The project completion date is June 2004.
- ♦ Phase II of the Palmetto Parkway is on schedule. Preliminary engineering is underway. Funding has been identified for right-of-way; however, approximately \$100 million is needed for construction.

- ♦ SC 118 is now essentially complete and open to traffic. The contractor is currently working on clean-up items and punch list items.
- ♦ Georgia Avenue Extension project - Preliminary design activities began in March 2004. The scope of the project was revised to include the North Augusta Riverfront Extension. The Department is negotiating the final contract with the selected contractor.

### **(c) Augusta Public Transit**

Mr. Johnson presented this item. The three new low-floor Blue Bird buses on order were sent to Minneapolis to check the A/C systems. One of the busses is back at Bluebird to make corrections that were found. The bus should be delivered in the middle of May. The Regency Mall bus stop was relocated to K-Mart on Deans Bridge Road. Route headways were changed to every 30 minutes. The City is negotiating a lease with the landowner to install a larger bus shelter on K-Mart property. Lamar Advertising will be placing the shelter on site once the lease is signed. The Augusta Commission will meet this month to decide on projects to be included on the next list of the Special Local Option Sales Tax. APT is requesting \$4.5 million for transit projects. Part of this will fund a transfer facility in south Augusta in FY 2006. The Augusta Commission will make the final decision on the list of projects to be placed on the sales tax referendum ballot.

At 3:00 P.M. today Optima Coach is bringing over a trolley bus for APT to look at.

### **(d) Aiken County Transit**

Mr. Strohminger presented the item. Two new buses are due to arrive soon. With the arrival of these buses, Best Friend Express will be crossing over to Augusta's transfer facility. The March 2004 ridership was 600, the highest monthly total for the Best Friend Express.

## **4. Consider recommendation to approve the South Carolina portion of the Final FY 2005 - 2007 Transportation Improvement Program.**

Mr. Fulmer and Mr. Strohminger presented this item. The reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Program is still being considered. TEA-21 was scheduled to be renewed last year. In order to meet scheduled deadlines, SC DOT has used the existing TIP and drafted a new three-year program (FY 2005-07) with the current funding levels. Once the new transportation bill is enacted amendments can be made to the TIP. Five people requested copies of the draft from the Aiken County Planning and Development Department. No comments have been received. A public information meeting will be held on the last Tuesday in May from 5 – 7pm in the County Council Chambers.

**CAC** - Mr. Donaldson moved and Mr. Gallop seconded the motion to approve the final TIP for the South Carolina portion of the study area. The motion was unanimously approved.

**TCC** - Mr. Strohminger moved and Mr. Johnson seconded the motion to approve the final TIP for the South Carolina portion of the study area. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **5. Consider recommendation to approve the Georgia portion of the draft FY 2005 - 2007 Transportation Improvement Program**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. The TIP is a three year transportation work program. This is a short term work program that is updated annually. The Georgia side covers three years and South Carolina covers five years. This year is a little off schedule in part because the Transportation Bill is up for

reauthorization. In a normal year, the TIP is published as one document. This year was staggered because of that situation. The Test Network Subcommittee met on April 27, to consider the Georgia side projects. The highlights of the recommended TIP were mailed out with the agenda. In April Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue announced his “Fast Forward Transportation Program”. This program will make available over the next six years \$15.5 billion to be distributed among projects throughout the State of Georgia. About half of the money will be concentrated in the Atlanta area. About \$7.5 million will be for improvements, primarily for the interstate system in the remainder of the state. This will accelerate some of the Interstate improvement projects in the study area, such as the widening of I-20 and construction of the I-520 / I-20 interchange. The Georgia portion of the TIP also includes a number of projects that have been in the TIP for a few years. The list of projects includes the acquisition of right-of-way on Old Petersburg Road and Columbia Road widening projects, and construction of the Davis Road widening project.

In terms of public transportation, the TIP includes capital and operating funds for Augusta Public Transit and Richmond County Service Agencies and for Columbia County’s transit program. Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) projects include the equipment for the traffic control center, which is under design now, as well as surveillance and communication equipment to be located along the interstates in Richmond and Columbia Counties. There is approximately \$12 – 13 million per year for lump sum categories for repair and maintenance projects; bridge painting; railroad protection devices at a variety of locations. Three enhancement projects in the Georgia portion of the study area are also included - two involving the Augusta Canal and one affecting Euchee Creek near Grovetown.

The TIP has to be financially constrained. Coming into this meeting the third year of the TIP is not financially constrained. Both the Wrightsboro Road widening project and the Flowing Wells Road widening project will both be ready to go to construction in FY 07. These two projects are included as “Illustrative Projects” in the draft TIP. Sangeetha Rao pointed out the display map with the TIP projects.

The 30-day public review and comment period on the draft TIP will run from May 20 through June 21, 2004. Three public information meetings will be scheduled during this time. Notices of the public information meetings will be sent out. The summary of the TIP will be posted on the website and distributed to a variety of public facilities throughout the area so the general public can have a means to look at the draft TIP. Once completed, a recommendation for a final TIP will be brought back for approval.

Mr. Lewis requested changes in the draft TIP for APT. The 5307 Capitol money will change for FY 05. A new phone system for \$33,000 will be installed. The phone has to be comparable to the City’s system. Also the funding level in FY 06 will be changed.

**CAC** - Mr. Schumacher moved and Mr. Donaldson seconded the motion to approve the final TIP for the Georgia portion of the study area. The motion was unanimously approved.

**TCC** - Mrs. Korbelik moved and Ms. Edmiston seconded the motion to approve the final TIP for the Georgia portion of the study area. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **6. Update on the 2004 CMS.**

Ms. Rao presented this item. Twenty corridors were studied this year – seven in Columbia County, three in Aiken County and ten in Richmond County. GPS units were used again this year which saves on run time and transcription time. Also, the data converts to ArcView shape files which can be plotted much easier on a map. There were no significant changes in congestion levels on the corridors. The one finding was on US 1, which showed at risk of congestion. Last year, this corridor was severely congested. Last year's data was probably flawed. Some of the corridors, for example Washington Road, Belair Road and Walton Way were studied last year as part of a GA DOT study. Those results were used this year. The CMS Report will be forwarded to the appropriate agencies, such as GA and SC DOTs and local traffic engineering departments, and will be used to help prioritize projects in the TIP. The Citizens' Advisory Committee discussed why, how and when runs are made and the how classifications are assigned to the corridors.

## **7. Early Action Compact – An Air Quality Initiative**

### **(a) Aiken County**

Mr. Strohming presented this item. Aiken County has elected to continue to participate in the Early Action Compact even though the County was designated as an attainment area. The final plan for measures being taken was turned in. Most of the measures in the Plan are complete or will soon be complete. The steps listed as ongoing include public outreach to educate the public on how to help improve air quality, such as refueling vehicles in the evening or not mowing on smog alert days. This information has been distributed at three public venues: Aiken Tech's Career Day, the Senior Spectacular in Aiken and Kids Earth Day in North Augusta. The State is sending ad copy to place in newspapers and on websites to help make people aware of the problem and what they can do to help.

### **(b) Richmond County**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. Richmond County is in the same situation as Aiken County. The Augusta Commission adopted a resolution in April in which they reinforced their commitment to the Early Action Compact in spite of the fact that Augusta is in attainment. The air quality initiatives that were adopted as part of the resolution were included in what is called the Georgia EPD's Early Action Plan for air quality in Augusta. That document has been submitted to the US EPA. The Early Action Plan will eventually become part of Georgia's State Implementation Plan for air quality. EPD is working on updating the State Implementation Plan now. Public meetings will be held in the fall on the State's plan. Everyone will have an opportunity to review and comment on the plan at that time. Copies of the draft plan or the local air quality initiatives are available.

Since Aiken County and Richmond County have signed the early action compact, as long as proactive steps are taken to clean up the air, transportation conformity and new source review requirements will be deferred. Augusta is just above the threshold for particulate matter. The rules governing the particulate matter should be published by late summer. This will require additional action. It might be appropriate to suggest to EPA that they consider an EAC-like document or approach with regard to particulate matter for communities that are on that threshold.

## **8. Update on Special Studies Projects**

### **(a) Whiskey Rd.- Silver Bluff Rd. Connector Study**

Mr. Strohming presented this item. The nine-member committee, including representatives from the City of Aiken Council, Aiken County and the general public, has finally selected a modified version of Route 3 for the connector road. The new road would tie into Silver Bluff Road opposite Glenwood Drive and intersect Whiskey Road on or near Chime Bell Church Road. The Committee preferred the route because it will have the least impact on three properties: the Freeman, International Paper and Delaney properties. The alignment will now be tested in the ARTS travel demand model.

### **(b) North Augusta Access Management Study**

Mr. Grkovic was not available to present this item. The project is very close to completion.

### **(c) ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. This project is moving along on schedule. The first round of public information meetings were held on April 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. About 8 – 10 people attended each meeting. There was some good feedback. The upcoming issue of the ARTS newsletter includes an article summarizing the meetings. Maps of the study area were on display and there was an interactive exercise in which people could identify the three most important transportation issues from a group of six issues listed. Socioeconomic estimates and projections will now be made and included in the ARTS travel demand model. The next round of public meetings will include displays indicating where future transportation problems might be and what projects will alleviate those problems. Questions and comments about the Long Range Plan are welcomed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Paul DeCamp  
Planning Director